

SATURDAY, MARCH 23, 1872.

Subject: The Hereafter.

PLYMOUTH PULPIT:

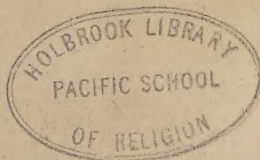
A Weekly Publication

OF

SERMONS

PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.



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HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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THE HEREAFTER.

“And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”—I. COR. XIII., 13.

It must be conceded, I think, that Paul stood second to none of all the inspired teachers in the range of knowledge which he possessed; and there were more topics that came under his view than was the case with the others. He has left more instruction, and instruction on more sides of thought and feeling, than either Peter or John—certainly more than James and the others. Yet it is very remarkable, especially when you consider the teachings of Paul—a man as confident as he was, positive, dogmatic; a man of intense firmness and self-consciousness; a man with all the elements which go to make a good professor of theology in any modern chair—it is astonishing, when you consider his teachings, how little he thought he knew. How positive he was of that which he did say! and yet, what a record he has left in respect to not knowing! It is the impression of many, that Christianity has developed such a range of truth that about every question which can be asked, may, by somebody, be answered. Because Christ has brought life and immortality to light, it is supposed that by all people who have studied enough, or prayed enough, or thought enough, there may be found some light to be thrown on almost every question that the heart ever wants to ask in regard to a man's condition here, and substantially in regard to his condition hereafter. But you will be surprised, if you go through the New Testament, to see how little specific teaching there is in regard to the great hereafter. You will observe that, in the main, the instruction of the New Testament in respect to the last things is generic. It shall be better understood in that term *generic*, when I shall have finished my exposition of this morning.

In this chapter the apostle was setting over against the conflicts, the ambitions, the desires of men for the gift of tongues, miracles,

prophecies, and what not, the fact that spiritual gifts—those which are within the reach of every one's experience—were more desirable than these special and ministerial gifts. In the course of that discussion, which I have read in your hearing this morning, he magnifies and glorifies the value and authority of love. He says, in respect to it,

“Love never faileth.”

It is not meant that when one has once possessed love, he can never lose it. That is not the question. It is a question of the general duration of great gifts and developments. It is as if the apostle had said, “There are many things in this world which are good, but which are only for a single age, or for one nation. They are local; they are transient; they are related to a certain stage of development in the human family. But love never fails. That is not local nor transient. It is everlasting. It inheres in the eternal nature of things. Prophecies—they answer their purposes; but they are ripe before the summer is over, and they drop. Tongues—they are not to be continued. They shall cease. Knowledge—spiritual discernment—that insight which was early given, at least to a part of the Christian Church—that is also relative. It passes away.” Then he goes on to say,

“For we know in part, and we prophesy [teach] in part.”

“There is not an atom of the genuine spirit of dogmatic theology in this. Men who have rounded up the whole system of belief from the very beginning of things clear on down to the present time, dividing it into chapters and sections, and caused it, as they say, by scientific processes, to cohere, and clamped the parts all together—no one of these men rises up from his chair, and says, “We only know a little here and there of the great moral realm. We know things fragmentarily. We only know in part.” So said Paul; but then, Paul would have had hard times in many modern churches!

“We know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.”

His eye was looking forward. He looked beyond the scene, not only of that age, but of all time. He seemed to be lifted above the career of humanity on this globe, and to have an ideal conception of a perfected manhood in the other life. It is as if he had said, “When that which is filled up, swelled [for *perfected* means filled up]—when that which has grown to its full size, and taken its color and flavor under the sun—when that which is perfect, is come, then all these transitory, local, limited, partial things, will drop away. As fall the early leaves, that have brought the plant to a better state and a higher form, so drop away these early experiences.”

He then explains this by a figure and an illustration. The figure we will take first :

“ Now we see through a glass, darkly ; but then face to face.”

In other words, *We see through a window dimly, indistinctly.* Some have supposed that a mirror was meant. Commentators have undertaken to show that it was a speculum, or a well-polished steel mirror ; and that people only seemed to look through it. I prefer to suppose that it was a window in which the glass, if glass was used at all, was extremely imperfect. It may have been horn scraped very thin, and giving a most smoky and indistinct view of all that was outside of it. Such a use was made of horn for dwellings in ancient times. And as one was sitting, and looking out through this semi-transparent substance upon the landscape before him, he could have but an indistinct idea of it. He lost its color and its sharp specialities. And the apostle, as it were, says, “ Now, in looking at the whole of human life, at all the developments of moral qualities, and the whole kingdom of God, as it swells out before us, with these mortal eyes and experiences, we can no more discern exactly what the fullness of it is, than one sitting at a window can see clearly everything that is beyond it.”

We see through a glass dimly, indistinctly ; but in that great future to which we are going, where humanity shall attain its full proportion and excellence, how shall we know ? What will be the condition then ? Why, only this : that the perfectness of knowledge which God has when he thinks, is going to be ours. Then we shall rise to such a condition that we shall know even as we are known. As He that made us, and understands us thoroughly, knows, so shall we know. Now it is all haze, with here and there a single point jutting out before us ; but by and by every part shall be perfect and distinct.

In order still more clearly to explain it, he brings in an illustration which comes home to our own personal experience—namely, the distinction between what we know as men, and what we knew as children. We see that there were bits and beginnings of knowledge in our childhood in respect to things which are transparent to us now. We remember how, for certain reasons which we could not understand, our father or mother was led to do or forbear certain things in reference to satisfying our curiosity. We remember that when we went to them with questions, they were often put back upon us with some feeble explanation, or some faint analogy, or with the answer, “ When you are older you will understand it a great deal better than I can explain it to you now.”

I look back and see the faint beginnings of these things in my

early childhood. Comparing the fragments of knowledge which I had then with what I have reached now by maturity of faculty and added experience, I find that they were but the merest sketches, scarcely initials, of the whole name. And the apostle says:

“When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.”

He said, substantially, “I put away all these imperfect conceptions in favor of others. I rose to a clear view of things as they are, instead of being limited to mere shadowy views of things.

The application is: In this complete state, when we attempt to look forward to things after death, and in the ulterior development of things, in the other life, our knowledge will be as transcendently greater than the best of us have here now, as the knowledge of manhood is better than the conceptions which we remember to have had when we were little children. In other words, now, at our best, after gathering up all the light which there is in Scripture, and after reasoning upon it as best we can, we can still say to ourselves without any special modesty, “We only know about the after-life, about the other state, as the child knows about life and manhood while it is yet a little child.” We know something in general, but very little in particular.

After this reasoning (recurring again to the words, “Love never faileth,” with which he began this run of thought), the Apostle says, “Now, although we put away so much mystery and dim knowledge; although in respect to the whole after-career there is so much that we cannot compass nor at all understand, and so much that we misunderstand, and so much that we understand in specks or in spots, yet, after all, there is something that we do know positively, and can understand; that is, that in the progress and development of ourselves hereafter, this is the line along which humanity is going to develop.

“Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three.”

There is the luminous path along which humanity is to move after death, and through the eternal cycles.

What, then, is *faith*? That word is used unfortunately. It is employed in a generic sense, as well as in many specific senses. *Faith*, according to the definition in Hebrews, is “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” That whole range of knowledge which a man can see, or hear, or handle—all scientific material knowledge—lies below the sphere of faith. Above that are what we call *moral intuitions* and *affectional intuitions*. That is to say, we think of ten thousand relations and things which have no external exponent in them. We think of things which are

not seen. In other words, the higher faculties of man—his superior reason, his moral sense, all those truths which are deduced from his experiences, or from processes founded upon them—are things unseen; that is, super-sensuous. We have a whole range of sensuous truth which we discern by the five senses of the body. We have the lower range, and the lower part of that range, which we discern thus. But, also, we are quite familiar with what is meant by friendship, and honor, and fidelity, and disinterestedness. These are qualities; but they are qualities which are invisible. We see what actions they lead to; but the things themselves we do not see.

As the mind is developed, it becomes competent to form larger and larger conceptions of things which exist only to the thought—of moral affections and intuitions. And this power, being generic, is faith. It is that action of the mind which takes in things that the senses do not take in—the truths that lie above them.

Now, as there is an infinite sphere of such things, so faith will have a sphere of special adaptations. There was, as recorded in Hebrews, a faith that worked by fear, which moved Noah to build the ark; there was a faith that worked by conscience, which led Abraham to sacrifice his son; and there is a faith which works by love. There are special applications of faith. But the generic idea of faith, is, that it is that power which discerns relations and conceives of truths which have no physical exponents. It is that power by which we take cognizance of things which are discernible only by the higher nature.

So, then, reducing it somewhat to a philosophical form, or bringing it within the circuit of modern habits of thought, we should say that the nature of man is to be developed in the other life.

“Now abideth faith.”

This is a thing which will last. The things which we see and handle in this world will perish. Our bodies we shall not carry with us into the other world. There is, you know, a belief that these outward forms will rise in the resurrection; but I should like to know what sort of physical bodies those will be which are resurrected without flesh and blood—for Paul says, as plainly as words can say,

“Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.”

There is to be a body raised; but it is not to be a physical body. It is to be a spiritual body. All that belongs to this mortal life; all that in this mortal life has depended upon physical organization; all that is relative to this mortal condition; all that is identified with this terraqueous globe; all those instincts which are necessary only for the body's support—these stop with the grave. The

body, with its aches, with its passions, with its appetites, with its digestive functions, with its distributive apparatus, with those processes which proceed from organic conditions, whether morbid or wholesome—that is relative to time and matter, and ceases. And all that which belongs to our mortal state; that is, the groupings together of men in families such as exist here, the groupings of families into neighborhoods and States, such as exist here, also, under certain generic laws, and the grouping of neighborhoods and States into nations—these are relative to this mortal condition. They belong to the physical. They take their shape and direction, of necessity, from the influences which spring up in the material world. Men are largely physical, and are subject to the laws of evolution. And all this ceases at death.

There is no evidence of the existence of any such things as these beyond this life. There are figures of cities, and mountains, and gardens, and rivers, and what not; but they are illustrations borrowed from our experience here to throw some conception into the other life. We can carry out with us no honors. We can carry out no wealth. We can carry neither statues nor pictures. We cannot carry anything that is physical. All things which belong to this world are partial, local, temporary, and they stop short of the other life. But there are some things which do not stop, which go on; and among them is *faith*. That goes beyond the grave. The higher part of man's nature, the superior part of his endowment, that by which he recognizes higher truths—that goes on.

“Now abideth faith, hope.”

Hope is not to be limited to our very partial use of that term. We can conceive that one may have faith in the sense in which I have defined it, and yet be as quiet as crystal, as steel, or as glass. One having faith may be a mere discerning spirit, living in the higher range of perception and conception of truth. But there is to be an animated nature. There is to be a heart of courage, of enterprise, of cheer. There is to be a heart that has action in it. There is to be something beyond mere faith. There is to be a growing spirit. There is to be such a thing as aspiration. There is to be a tendency which shall make a man go upward. And that is hope—glorious hope. All that which leads a man to go on and up, developing toward things better from things worse I think is included in this term *hope*.

“Now abideth faith, hope.”

Courageous, cheerful, animating hope—that is to go on forever.

One thing more—*love*.

“Now abideth faith, hope, love.”

All that impulse by which the music of gladness is rung out in created things, as if everything was a harp, and lived only to give forth from itself sweet sounds of music for others ; all that part of human nature which is purest and best, which moves men toward beneficences, and which leads them to give and give forever, using themselves as a power beneficently—that abides.

Says the apostle, "There are three things in which our future manhood is going to stand. It is not going to be what it is estimated to be here in households and societies ; it is going to be developed along the line of faith and hope and love. In the direction of these three great elements lies your manhood. In that direction, lying luminous as a beam of light, is the path which your future manhood is to take. Says the apostle,

"Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three ; but the greatest of these [that toward which the others both tend] is love."

If now, you put all this together, you will see that the chiefest of the apostles throws no discouragement upon our faith of the future life. He does not take away from us the blessedness of the vision of that "rest which remaineth for the people of God." But he does teach us that all the minute parts of it, all its details, are beyond the reach of our knowledge. We are not forbidden to lift our eye as a poet or painter does, and limn some vision of the hereafter ; we have that permission ; but so far as authoritative revelation is concerned, we know that we shall not transfer the relative state of things out of this life into the other ; and yet, that in the other life we shall carry all our higher nature to an infinite degree of brightness and affluence. We know, still further, that our growth and development there will be accompanied with ecstatic joy.

To those, then, who ask what are to be the conditions in the other life of the countless myriads of men who have been going out of this world through countless ages, all the answer that can be given, is : We know not. We know not whether from other sources than this earth heaven is thronged and populated. We know not where heaven is. We know not what it is. It has not been revealed to us. There is not a word from the beginning of the Bible to the end that can tell you definitely where heaven is, or what it is. It is the place where the blessed are. *Place ?* That term smacks of physical matter ; and so far it is an imperfect term. Where the blessed are, is heaven ; but whether it is near or far, whether it is above or below, we know not. We are not in a state to know. What might be called the geographical position of heaven is a thing which you may think of as much as you please, but which no man has a right to put his demarcation on, with, "Thus saith the Lord."

You may say, "Thus fondly have I thought; thus am I glad to believe;" but nothing more have you permission to say. In regard to how the vast concourse in heaven subsist, the Word of God is silent.

"We know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." "For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."

We know not whether there are to be national divisions, communal groups, or anything such as we have here. The mode of future being transcends anything that we know. We are as unable to understand it as a dog is to understand the nature of a commonwealth. Go, try to explain to the next intelligent creature below you all that you know of virtue, and disinterestedness, and love, and beauty. Explain a joke to a dog, if you can. Here are beings one or two ranks below you; and it is absolutely impossible to explain to a lower state of faculty the qualities of a higher state, or of a higher class of faculties superinduced upon a lower one. We stand in the line of the same analogy; and it is impossible to explain to us the evolvments which come from new faculties, or from old faculties developed to such a degree that they are to all intents and purposes new to us.

If you ask why God did not reveal more to us respecting the hereafter, I reply by asking, Why do not you explain something of the domesticities of life to a dog? He could not understand it if you did; and we could not understand that which relates to the future if God should explain it to us.

Then comes the question, What is to be the condition of families? Then comes the question so fond, so natural, and so unrebukable, but to which we receive no answer, Shall I know my friends in the heavenly land?

"Then shall I know even as also I am known." "Where I am, there ye may be also."

We infer, from the general tenor of Christ's instructions by which he comforted his disciples, and from the sayings of some of the apostles, that we shall retain our identity in the other life; but there is no explicit knowledge or teaching on this subject. I believe we shall know each other in heaven; but still, think of it a little. How do we know each other now? If I were to take a Baltimore oriole, and show him to you as he sits full of liveness singing on a bough; and if you were to bring him down with a shotgun, and pluck off his crimson or scarlet feathers, so that there was nothing left but the bare bird, and then set him up, would I

know him? Would you know him? He would present an appearance rather strange and homely and unsavory.

I would not convey anything in the way of ridicule, nor undervalue anything; but this I say: that when we come to live together again, much that we call our personal identity here will be left behind. We have adapted ourselves to taking people as they are. One has been so irritable that you have been in the habit of restraining yourself in his presence, and you cannot dissociate from him the thought of his irritableness. Another is proud; and you have gone around the feeling of pride in him as a man would go around the edge of a projecting rock, that he might not dash himself or his horse against it. Another is cautious. Another is headlong. There are all temperaments and modes of development, and you have to stop and think how to get along with them. You make an average, and take them for what they are to you here. You do not appreciate their superior excellences—those traits which will shine brightest there. You see them in their undeveloped state. Your thought concerning them is, “How shall I move among them? You take your realization of their present imperfections, and transfer that to their after-state. But if all that is sweet and beautiful in them should be harmonized and rounded out into symmetry, and all the passions and appetites and imperfections and clogs which belong to them here below should be dropped away, how would you know them? What would be left of some men to know them by if you were to take away all their faults?

While we believe that in the other life we shall know each other, we are in danger of attempting to transfer too much of the physical in which they live to that other life, and of supposing that we shall see our friends in the spirit-world as we see them here. If you allow for the drifting of an undercurrent in making your calculation, there is great liberty in this direction; but it is a liberty which will be likely to bring you upon shoals.

I believe that I shall know my friends, and that they will know me, in heaven; but there will be a great deal of difference between the knowing in this life and the knowing in that. I know that we shall be as the angels of God; I know that we shall be satisfied, because we shall be like Him; I know that we shall be sons of God; but it doth not yet appear what that shall be. Nobody can now tell what that means. I shall know you, but it will be in your coronation robes. It will be when you have on your crowns, not of silver or of gold, but of a glorious, heavenly, divine virtue. It will be when you shall bear the palm, not of any perishing tree, but of immortalities gathered in you. It will be when you are priests and

kings in the other life. I shall look with glowing eyes on your glittering beauty then. I shall know you, and you shall know me, and you shall be mine, and I shall be yours. Oh, brethren, how it will transcend anything that we know or can comprehend now!

Take some maiden. She has seen the stranger come as a toiler and ask work of her father; and yet, there was something in his brow and in his eye that kindled respect. He worked from day to day on wages; little by little she discovered rare virtues and excellences in him; and at last he won her ingenuous heart and pledge. Yet it was hid from her who he was, until, all arrangements having been consummated, she was carried by her parents to a distant city. It was understood that there was to be the coronation of a king; and she was filled with wonder as to what that could mean. And when the trumpets blew, and the curtains were thrown aside, issuing from the portals of a palace to the magnificent platform, came forth he who was to be crowned; and the firing of artillery and the ringing of bells made music through all the heavens above; and behold, there stood before her dazzled eyes her lover, no more toiling and sweating, but lifted up in his supreme beauty, and grandly robed, and the object of universal admiration and cheering respect, with a crown upon his head!

This is all literal and plain compared with what it will be when I who have known you in the flesh, brother and sister, behold you brought out in your Father's kingdom, and God shall put a crown upon your head, and I shall say, "It is the same one that I loved upon earth."

"It doth not yet appear what we shall be."

But we ask, "Shall I find in heaven all those who have become so necessary to my mortal happiness that I can scarcely do without them? Shall I find my children there?" I shall surely find mine there. Will they know me? Do they know me now? Do their sweet little thoughts hover above me, and distil upon my head, as dews come upon flowers at night? Are my children mine? or, are they like the drops of a brook, which flows between flowery banks until it loses itself in a river, which pours out into the ocean? Are they only drops mingled with myriad other drops, to make up the universal sea? Are my children immersed and lost in the great ocean of human existence? Have I given them up for ever? Is all this discipline, all this lore of the nursery, all this sweet life upon the knee, all this night and day in my bosom, as they lay sick while they were babes—is all this gone forever? Is this, too, one of the illusions of life? My boys—are they mine only as they are everybody's? Is there nothing of me in them? Is there nothing that my heart may claim in them?

I believe that we shall know our children, as I believe that they shall know us, not only as well as we know them, but far better. Will they not have grown? Very likely. I do not know. I cannot say. One thing I believe, and that is, that faith, hope, and love are not relative. All that in my children which contained the seed of promise; all that through which I looked confidently toward the future; all that which made them my companions and my joy—that shall abide, and shall be mine. They will not appear as they did in their mortal bodies. Their bodies will then be rare and exquisite compared with those which they wore on earth. But there will be lines and lineaments by which I shall identify them, though they will be without the clogs and hindrances which belong to this mortal state.

I doubt not that we shall find our children there. I do not believe that the heart has been kindled to so much fear and suffering that it may be quenched with everlasting forgetfulness.

This is my liberty. It is not God's revelation. It is my necessity. And I am not rebuked when I indulge in such thoughts. My heart cries out to those who have loved me and gone to the heavenly land; and when I cry to them, I hear a voice answering, as the Spirit and the Bride are represented as saying, "Come!" At night, by day, at twilight, in joy and in sorrow, I hear the voices of loved ones saying, "Come!" Over all troubles, louder than the noise of winds and storms, I hear the voices of those who have gone before me, saying, "Heaven is real; God is real; love is eternal; come—from out of winter, from out of trouble, from out of storms, from out of the sin-land, come!" There sound perpetually from the walls and battlements of the celestial city voices that win and woo every aching heart, saying, "Come, come, come!"

And yet, if you go into the minutiae, into the specialities, of those things which a mother's heart, or a father's heart, or a lover's heart, or a friend's heart craves to know, there is no answer. But you are left to your own liberty. As a poet is left to imagine what he pleases, and as an artist is left to draw what he pleases, so you may imagine and draw what you please; only the results at which you arrive will not be authoritative. This, however, is certain: that our friends are not lost. This is certain: that they are not less than they were on earth. This is certain: that they are more joy-bearing and joy-producing than they were here. This is certain: that I shall be satisfied.

So, Christian friends, not to draw out unduly this line of thought, nor to weary you with it, in all our longings for the heavenly land, let us bear in mind that, according to the teaching of the most rapt

and inspired of all the teachers of the New Testament, the other life differs from this, not by the wasting away of things with which we are familiar here, and which we are wedded to here, except so far as they are relative to a low and imperfect state.

What eagle ever went sorrowing after its shell when once it was born? While it is an egg, the shell is its protection, and in the walls of that little globe it has its safety; but when once it has broken the shell, and come out, and become an eagle of the heaven, it never goes sorrowing back to the nest again, though when it was but an eaglet, and unfledged, it hugged it so.

In all your thoughts of this life, where God has nested us, and where we are fed and developed, remember that the things which are now dear to you, while they are things good and desirable, are many of them transient; but that part of your nature which sorrow is meant to develop, that part which love is ripening, that part out of which comes the truest joy, that part which leads to all that is sublime in character, and is transcendent and divine, and allies you to God—remember that this grows apace, and waits in those that have gone before. How beautiful it will be when we shall find, not what we have lost, but that which has been saved and nurtured for us!

I go, in the autumn, and sow my seeds through my garden—for many of them must be autumn-sown; and when the spring comes, and I visit my grounds again, I shall find not what I sowed.

I threw the brown black seeds into the dirt; there stands the glowing spike all a-blossom. I sowed to the flesh: I shall reap of the spirit. I gave dust to dust. God wrapped in his arms my child. He tended my dear ones. He loved into sweeter beauty my friends. They are nobler than when I elected them. And in the heavenly land they wait. What? How looking? In what occupations? We know not precisely; but this we know, generally: that faith, hope, love, and all that can be evolved out of them in human experience, are forever unchanged, except to grow brighter and brighter.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We adore thee, our Father. Though we behold but thine outward glory—the trailing of thy robe, as it were; though we discern but little of thy countenance; and though we are not yet lifted up and purified so that we can enter in, and know the heart of God; yet, where thou dwellest, there is light. We look toward the beams and the glory thereof, and rejoice in that which we do know, and from it interpret that which is yet to be revealed. We rejoice that as we live and grow toward the spirit, we are preparing ourselves for that higher sphere and that more blessed knowledge. Not forever shall we be confined below; not forever imprisoned in the flesh, nor tried and proved and tested in our moral natures, and in all the exigencies of human life. Thou hast put us away from thee that thou mightest bring us back increased and purified. Thou hast sent us thitherward to school, and thou art waiting to bring us back to our Father's house, educated into the knowledge of true spiritual living. Grant that we may have beforehand some sense of that rest toward which we are hastening; that we may behold life not merely to ask for its pleasures, to participate in its joys, to reap its honors, to mourn over its infelicities and shun its pains. May we be quickened by it in our inward life, knowing whose sons we are, and who is waiting for us in the heavenly land. May we accept all the experiences of this mortal sphere, so that they may work together for our good, cleansing us, strengthening us, inspiring whatever is good in us, and augmenting it, both in quality and in volume, that by and by we may be not unworthy to stand in thy presence, when we shall have been cleansed, purified, and presented by Jesus, our Elder Brother, before the throne of the Father. Then, if, O Lord our God, thou shalt say, "Worthy, enter!" what will have been all the trouble of life? What will have been its disappointments, its sharp conflicts, its crosses, the baptism of blood even, if by suffering we imitate the Captain of our salvation, who through sufferings was made perfect? Vouchsafe to every one in thy presence that foresight of faith, that enthusiasm and gladness, that joy of confident belief, by which he may enter in and take beforehand some fruit of the heavenly land.

If there be any in thy presence who are bowed down with trouble, today, may the cloud lift. If there be any who feel that they have been pressed beyond endurance, reveal to them that inward hidden strength which comes from God, that they may stand, not in themselves, but by the might of the power that is in thee.

We pray for all those who mourn the hidings of thy countenance, and for all those who are surprised by sin, and who mourn and grieve over their repeated insubordinations—their pride, their selfishness, their vanity, their various worldly ways. Will the Lord grant that they may be strengthened with all strength, and with knowledge, to know how to overcome besetting sins, and how to build up into symmetry and perfection all these erring parts of their nature.

We pray that thou wilt be gracious unto any that are in bereavements, sorrowing for the loss of those who have been dear to them. Grant that their grief may not weave about all the objects of their thoughts garments of mourning. May they discern, as did those of old, angels clothed in white. And grant that they may be lifted out of their sorrows by the cheer of the Holy Spirit.

If there be those who are in the midst of afflictions, and are hindered from coming to the house of God, we pray that thou wilt be with them, and give them strength of body, and hope and joy in the Holy Ghost. If there be any who are sick, we pray that they may be graciously restored to health,

or be prepared for the events of thy providence. And may it be alike to them whether thou shalt with thy hand—the pierced hand of love—call them to thee, or lengthen out their earthly service. May the Lord's dealings with them seem to them the best of gifts.

Remember, we pray thee, all of those who are burdened with duty and daily care. Especially remember those to whom have been committed households, and who stand as ministers in those households, bearing the burdens of the weak, supplying the wants of the needy, and attempting to fulfill the law of Jesus Christ. We pray that thou wilt strengthen their going. Grant that they may not be discouraged. Even where they wait long for the fruit of the seed which they have sown in tears, may they still have faith to wait, and to believe in the Lord.

We pray that all the young in our congregation may grow up in truth, honor, purity, and integrity of purpose, through life. We pray that they may serve the church and the community in which they dwell with more signal fidelity than those who have gone before them.

We beseech of thee that men may take a higher thought of disinterested love and unselfish devotion, and that our land may be redeemed from all sordid influences, and from all corruptions, and from all strivings of wicked men. We pray that thou wilt purify this great nation, and make it God-fearing.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon all that preach to-day. Everywhere remember those who teach. May our Sabbath-schools and Bible-classes come up in remembrance before thee. Bless those who labor therein. May they labor in faith, rejoicing in sight when that is vouchsafed to them; and may they still labor in faith when sight is denied them. May they have faith though success may not seem to attend their efforts. May their faith never fail. May they never be weary in well-doing.

Grant thy blessing to rest upon the nations of the earth everywhere. May those who are in darkness receive the light of the Gospel in Christ Jesus. May those who are in trouble be relieved from the conflicts of the world. May violence cease, and peace reign instead. May knowledge drive away superstition and ignorance.

We pray that the great race may come up in remembrance before thee. May they grow too strong to be oppressed. May they stand, at last, clothed in their rights, able to govern themselves, and be governed of God, so that there shall be no more bitterness, no more wars by ambitious rulers, and so that the whole earth may sit together, rejoicing in love and harmony.

Hear us in these our petitions, accept our thanksgiving, pardon all our sins, receive us graciously, and redeem us finally with everlasting salvation; and to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be praises immortal. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our heavenly Father, wilt thou grant thy blessing to rest upon the word spoken. May it cheer and comfort us. May we seek out of this stormy land, the land of the unsetting sun. May our thoughts know how to fly through the space which separates between life and death. Here, in the death-land we begin to live where, living, we shall be as thou art, O loving Father!

Comfort those who mourn. Strengthen those who are weakened by trouble. Draw near to those whose hearts, long hungering, are unfed. Be a Father yet to thy children who are lingering here, and bring us all safely, at last, to that eternal house not made with hands.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. *Amen.*

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
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